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Belief Statement

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Through my years in grade school I never thought I’d want to be a teacher. During the college application process I applied to schools as undecided. I went to Colby-Sawyer in New Hampshire and declared a major in communications and a minor in biology. However, I quickly became unhappy with both content areas. First semester of my freshman year I was in a statistics class and had a terrible professor. Thankfully, I was exposed to some of the material in high school it came natural. I found myself helping other students in the class and how I was teaching them made more sense than our professor did. One peer even said to me   
“without you I never would have passed this class.” I also helped a girl in my dorm that was in a college algebra class. I mentioned one day my favorite subject in high school was math and she immediately asked me for help. We did her homework together so she could understand where she needed guidance and when she got stuck I’d help her through the problem until she could do them all on her own. Since she had been working with me her quiz and test grades kept improving and it was exciting for both of us. One day she said to me “You should be a teacher.” At first I thought she was crazy but those five words stuck with me for weeks. I wanted to change my major anyways so I began talking to my former teachers and looking up teachers’ blogs online about their experiences. I met with academic advisors at the career center on campus inquiring about the field of education. After my meetings and talking the idea over with my parents I decided to go into the field of education and my first step was to transfer to UMF.

To apply for acceptance for National Honors Society one has to have various number of hours volunteering. To fill some of mine I volunteered in my friend’s mom’s kindergarten classroom. I did activities like counting, number recognition, games, arts and crafts, and a lot of reading with the kids. I also helped do administrative work when the kids were at a special or lunch/recess. I loved every minute I spent in her classroom but realized it wasn’t an age group I would want to teach. I knew if I ever were to teach someday it would be in a middle school or high school classroom. Some of the most influential people in my life were high school teachers of mine. They came to sporting events, concerts, student activities, and they helped me through my college application and acceptance process. One in particular was intrigued by my indecisiveness and always offered guidance, suggestions, and support. Unlike this teacher, my indecisiveness frustrated my parents. When it came down to having conversations about college and post secondary experiences I went to her instead of my parents because it was more useful and I was able to get more accomplished. I’ve realized that for many kids they get more support, attention, and guidance from their teachers than their parents and actually need to spend time like this with teachers. For some their school is safer than home and they find comfort within the classroom. I want to be that kind of teacher for adolescents and young adults who are at such an influential time in their lives. I want to teach math because it’s the subject I’m best at, always want to learn more about, and challenges me to think.

One important way I learn is by having almost everything in my life organized so my classroom will be just that. My classroom and lessons will always have order and my students will be aware of it. I like to know what’s going to happen during the class before the start of the class and I need to know what’s expected of me. My students will always be given clear instructions and expectations so they aren’t confused and can be prepared for class. My expectations will include choices and being able to work in groups or individually.

My fear about teaching is that students are going to be negative about my class from the first day for the sole reason of it being a math class. When I share with people what I want to do a typical response is “What? Math? Really? I hated math class in high school”. People give up on math too early in life so by the time they get to high school math their opinions are already formed. My fear is that I’m not going to be able to change this way of thinking and be effective in showing them it is possible to understand math. I loved math classes because they were the only classes in high school that were challenging for me. I liked science, english, and history but I did the work, got decent grades, all while not learning much. My sophomore year I was in Algebra II and my teacher was exactly the kind of teacher I hope to be someday. He made math interesting and because he built a strong relationship with his student’s people wanted to make him proud. I was motivated to try my hardest and do my best whenever I could. My dream is to be that teacher for students but my fear is that I will fall short.

Through this course I hope to gain confidence in building a lesson that is universally designed and equipped to serve the needs of all my students. I want to leave this course and feel and think like a teacher. Next year I’m going to be in a lot of math classes so I want to think about how I could put this information into a lesson plan and different methods and activities to use to facilitate learning. My fears will starve when I gain confidence in lesson planning and delivering instruction because if I get instruction on how to do this effectively and diversely then my fear of teaching should not exist anymore.